

The Importance of Supporting English Language Learner Students

This week I was proud to host Speaker Paul Ryan in Florida's 26th Congressional district. One of our stops while he was in South Florida was Caribbean Elementary, a school in Miami with many English Language Learners. During my time in Congress, supporting these students has been one of my top priorities, so much so, that within the first two months, I introduced a bipartisan amendment that would directly benefit students learning English as a second language. This amendment was included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and as a Member of the final negotiations in the Conference Committee, I was able to ensure its signing into law. My provision ensures that these students are still being counted, while having more time to become proficient in

English before scores are held against them, their teachers, and their schools.

The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and was a long overdue step in revitalizing our education system. The spirit of NCLB was that every student matters, and with this new bill, we are poised to capture that same essence while improving upon its failures and drawbacks.

The implementation of this new law which I am closely



**Congressman
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monitoring marks the end of an overly rigid, one size-fits-all accountability system which had severely burdened school districts and teachers. It gives states the flexibility to create accountability systems that work for their students, ending the federal government's punitive role in education. This bipartisan, bicameral agreement replaced 49 unsuccessful and often confusing federal programs and now empowers parents by providing greater school choice. The law also prohibits the Secretary of Education from imposing requirements on states and schools which will give teachers the liberty to create more personalized lesson plans.

Building a better education system for every child in America is one of my great passions. I began this work six years ago as a member of the Miami-Dade County

School Board and have been able to continue my focus on children while serving on the Committee on Education and the Workforce here in Congress. This law puts children at the center of America's education system, reduces burdensome regulations on school districts and teachers, and promotes school choice. As a Member of the Conference Committee, I fought for a strong, but fair accountability system and to protect the interests of English Language Learners, their teachers, and the schools who serve these students — a major priority for our schools in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. The Every Student Succeeds Act is a perfect example of how Republicans and Democrats can work together to improve quality of life in our country.